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IVAN;
A TRAGEDY.

IN FIVE ACTS.

ALTERED AND ADAPTED FOR REPRESENTATION.

—
BY WILLIAM SOTHEBY, ESQ.

—

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TO

HANS SLOANE, ESQ.



DEAR SIR,

I MUST indulge the warmth of feeling, which induces me, without previous communication, to dedicate to you, the following Tragedy, as a trifling acknowledgement of gratitude for many acts of real kindness.

The cultivation of polite literature has never been neglected by you, amid the important duties, which, through a long and honourable life, voluntarily devoted to public services, have most usefully engaged your time and talents, as a Senator, a Soldier, and a Magistrate.

If, in cultivated minds, like yours, "IVAN," altered and corrected, can excite any interest, the labour of the Author will receive its most grateful recompense.

Your affectionate Nephew,

WILLIAM SOTHEY.

LONDON,
March 7th, 1816.

PREFACE.



To have pointed out, in their respective places, the numerous, but less important alterations, occasioned by adapting the following Tragedy from the closet to the stage, would have disfigured the page, and fatigued the patience of the writer and the reader: but the author of “Ivan” ventures to particularize the whole scene, entirely new, which concludes the Third Act, and the additional speeches between Ivan and Naritzin, in the Third Scene of the Fifth Act.



DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

Ivan, *the deposed Emperor of Russia.*
Count Naritzin, *Governor of Schlussemburgh.*
Count Rimuni, *Favourite of the Empress.*
Galinovitz, *Sub-governor.*
Mirovitz, *an Officer on guard in the Fort.*
Feodor, *his Brother, ditto.*
Galvez, *Servant of Naritzin.*
Narshkoff and two sons, *Fishermen.*
Ortosk, *Sentinel.*

Senators, Conspirators, Soldiers.

WOMEN.

Elizabeth, *Empress of Russia.*
Petrowna, *Wife of Count Naritzin,*

*Place, the Fort of Schlussemburgh, an isle
in the Neva.*

Time, fourteen hours.

IVAN.

A C T I.

SCENE I.

A dark Cavern, outside the Ramparts, on the Borders of the Neva; in the back ground, the Fort and Castle of Schlusselfburgh.

Several Conspirators walking, in seeming impatience, to and fro.

1st Con. Would Mirovitz were here! why this delay?

FEODOR enters in haste

Feo. Welcome, my friends; your zeal has outpac'd time.

Hark! 'tis the morning-watch—from tow'r to tow'r,
Around yon fort's wide circuit, loudly rings
The voice of challeng'd sentinels; and, lo!
The sun, swift springing from the vale of vapours,
O'er wide Ladoga's peaceful water, darts
His level ray. Thrice welcome, gallant comrades!

The fair dawn, like a blissful omen, beams
Propitious on our meeting.

1st Con. Why delays
Your brother, Mivoritz ?

Feo. Brave comrades, dread not
In Mirovitz delay. Have ye not oft-time
Witness'd his valour ; first to mount the breach ;
Or, singly, scale the fortress ? Wherefore then
Now doubt his resolution ?

2d Con. Hark, some step
Approaches.

1st Con. Comrades ! be upon your guard.
[*They draw their swords.*]
Nearer it hastens : on your guard ; I warn you.
Now boldly challenge.

2d Con. Friend or foe ? Advance not,

MIROVITZ *enters.*

Feo. 'Tis Mirovitz.

Miro. Put up your swords, my friends !
And I intreat you pardon this delay :
A herald from the court awhile detain'd me.

Feo. A herald ! what his mission ?

Miro. It concerns us ;
It deeply touches us : give patient hearing.
Now, at this hour, beneath this cave obscure,
No spy will steal upon us,

1st Con. We attend.

Miro. The herald who detain'd me has confirm'd
The rumour, that so long has vex'd this isle

With woe and indignation :—yes, brave soldiers!
Your chieftain is disgrac'd.

1st Con. The good Naritzin !

Whose rule and kindly government have chang'd
This isle of misery to the blest abode
Of soothing pity!—why disgrac'd ?

Miro. Rimuni,

The minion, dreads him ; seek no further cause.
This day the base Rimuni, and Elizabeth,
Th' usurper, in these woeful haunts, decide
Naritzin's doom: Siberia's wilds await him.
Meantime the charge and custody of Ivan
(Curse on the tyrants! mine by right that charge)
Rest on Michelovitz.

Feo. You long have shar'd
His secret councils.

Miro. Yes ; Michelovitz
In secret favours Ivan ; and at times,
Not in dark hints and doubtful words, has urg'd
Naritzin's consort, his belov'd Petrowna,
To aid his high design, and rouse the prince
To vindicate his birthright. In Petrowna
The soul of Ivan breathes ; but while his charge
Securely rested on Naritzin's word,
Petrowna mourn'd in secret, and refus'd
To listen to Michelovitz : but now,
When insult and oppression threat Naritzin,
Her high indignant spirit, unrepres'd,
Feels fresh abhorrence of th' usurper's guilt,
And glows for Ivan's freedom.

Feo. Fix the hour :

All now are present—the selected guard
This night who watch o'er Ivan : speak thy will.

Miro. My will ! not so : 'tis loyalty, 'tis honour
Points out their path. Comrades, the prisoner, Ivan,
Is Russia's rightful Emperor. He was crown'd
King in his cradle. Soldiers ! 'tis your sovereign
Claims vengeance. By his wrongs, his woes, I
urge you :

Recal to mind the day which hail'd him monarch,
Saw him a helpless prisoner ; call to mind,
How, on from fort to fort, they dragg'd their victim,
Ere to this spot accurst, this last abode
Of mis'ry and despair, Rimuni doom'd him
As one entomb'd alive, in yon drear cell
To moulder limb by limb.

1st. Con. His woe would melt
A heart of stone.

Miro. Say rather, rouse the soul
To direst vengeance. Since that day of horrors
No ray of light has glimmer'd on the cell
That hears his groan : and till renown'd Naritzin
Deign'd guard this isle, the fierce barbarians tor-
tur'd

His tender limbs—the sentinels on watch,
Tho' us'd to blood, and groans of horrid death,
Have quak'd to hear his night-shriek—Gallant
soldiers !

Hear !—hear you this ? and shall such foul mis-
deeds,

That at the mention chill the soul with horror,
Pass unaveng'd ?

1st Con. No—we will free our sov'reign.
Fix thou the hour.

Miro. First, yield me patient hearing.
You all revere Naritzin.

1st Con. Yes—as children
Honour a father.

Miro. You would shed your blood
To shield him from oppression.

1st Con. Freely!

2d Con. Freely!

Miro. Naritzin cannot brook such deep disgrace.
Thus wrong'd by her: her—on whose brow his
hand

Once fix'd the crown! if fam'd Naritzin join us,
The realm would rise in arms.

Cons. Lead to Naritzin—

Miro. [*stopping them.*] Yet stay.
Say, gallant soldiers! if the lord Naritzin
Decline our proffer'd aid, are all resolv'd
To free their sov'reign?

1st Con. We will rescue Ivan,
Or bravely perish. On—

Miro. Go, Feodor,
Thou lead them to Naritzin, and there urge
All that the brave dare utter—I, meantime,
Will arm the mariners; bold men, prepar'd
At warning, o'er yon flood to waft their king
To liberty and empire.—Friends, farewell!
Yet, ere we part, a soldier's honour pledge,
That in this cave, ere night-fall, once again

We meet, to fix the hour, and give to each
Fit charge and separate station.

1st Con. Yes—ere night-fall,
Here we will meet. To thee we freely pledge
A soldier's honour —(*to Feodor*)—Lead us forth.

Feo. Brave comrades,
I lead where glory summons : fearless follow.
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

A rocky shore on the margin of the Lake, overlooked by a Bastion of the Fort.

NARSHKOFF and his two SONS enter, and spread a Net on the Rocks.

Son. [*to his brother.*] Cheer you, my brother :
here awhile take rest :
You are o'er-tir'd : here in the sun repose.

Narsh. Give me the net, and I will spread it out.
And on the smooth rock dry its dripping meshes :
So, if perchance some soldier cross our way,
We shall not breed suspicion, but may seem
Intent on our day labour.

[*He looks round earnestly.*]

Son. Tell me, father,
Why do you seem disturb'd? what care comes o'er
you?
Why point to yon dark nook?

Narsh. We have o'er-shot it.

Look, my brave boys, our tough oars have o'er-shot
The little creek—'Tis there, beneath that rock,
Where yon huge birch bow'd down by weight of
years

Hangs o'er the Neva.

Son. 'Tis a cheerless spot,
Gloomy as night—

Narsh. That was th' appointed place;
There we must anchor our light skiff, and wait
The signal—When, at night, the torch thrice waves
On yon tall eastern turret—look—

Son. I note it—

Narsh. At the third signal, at a moment's warning
All must be ready: we must hoist the sail
If fair the breeze: if foul, brave boys, your sinews
Must not refuse to labour at the oar,
Till our good vessel o'er Ladoga's lake
Has safely wafted the entrusted charge—
It was no trifling bribe—

Son. Our life's at hazard—

Narsh. So is it, every day, when we do tempt
The wave, and cast our meshes in the flood.
Look you, so we but reach yon shore in safety
The rest of life we may carouse at will.
Take up the net—push off the boat—away—

Son. My brother is o'er-tir'd; a little moment,
A moment rest. And, tell us, I entreat you,
Whom we must land in safety on yon shore?

Narsh. I know not: but, no doubt, some high-
born prisoner,

Son. Oh! were it Ivan,
This hand should from my arm first drop in the
wave

Ere it let loose the oar. That hapless youth!
I know not why it is, whene'er I hear
His story, though it sorely grieve my heart,
Yet doth it chain mine ear.

Narsh. 'Tis ever so
When miseries unprovok'd command our pity.
In sooth his woe would melt a heart of stone.
Ivan is rightful emperor: he was crown'd
King in his cradle—

Son. Out—alas the day!
It had been better, father, had poor Ivan
Our brother been, and born like us to labour.
Then—he had 'scap'd those torturers.

Narsh. Would that Ivan
Had perish'd with the monk who lur'd him forth,
Ere to yon hideous cave the ruffians dragg'd him!
'Tis now eight years gone by, and Ivan then
Scarce ten years old! 'Twas a bleak eve, and loudly
The Neva roar'd: I never shall forget it.
Just as I moor'd my boat yon side the flood,
A band of soldiers hail'd me: loud their voice,
And fiercely, as in wrath, their swords unsheath'd
Wav'd o'er their prisoners. 'Twas a piteous sight,
And all was strife and tumult. I full fain
Had fled the spot, when one, with whose stern voice
I dar'd not parley, bad me to this isle
Ferry the prisoners, Ivan, and the monk,
Each bound in chains—

Son. The boy, their king, in chains!

Narsh. Sore manacled. The child sunk down
o'erpower'd,

Mute, motionless, save ever and anon

A big tear trickled, and a deep sigh burst

As it would break his heart. Not so the monk :

I heard his thrilling outcry, as he writh'd

And struggled with his chains, and with clench'd

In frantic rage oft struck his hoary temples. [fist

And as I reach'd the fort, just as my oar

Spent its last stroke, the monk, uprising, dash'd

From either side the guard that closely grasp'd him,

Then plung'd into the flood with all his weight

Of fetters.—Never man beheld him more :

Save, yearly, on that day, that very hour

He perish'd, some have seen—

Son. Seen what? Say, father—

Narsh. His very self, that monk, so manacled,
Rise from the flood, and point with threat'ning
hand

To Ivan's tow'r. But, hush! the air has ears,

And the whole isle is vex'd with vig'lant spies.

[*Ortosk, a Sentinel, appears on the bastion.*

Come, let us hence—

Ort. Speak—

Son. 'Tis the sentinel!

Ort. I charge you, on your lives, say, wherefore
here?

Why on this spot?

Narsh. We are poor fishermen

Who in these waters seek by daily labour

Our hard-earn'd food. We were o'er-tir'd, good
soldier,

And came to dry our nets, and rest awhile
On this smooth beach.

Ort. Away, nor loiter here :

If, when I challenge next, you here are found,
You are for life imprison'd. [*Sentinel goes.*

Narsh. Come, my boys!

'Tis dangerous tarrying here.

Son. Oh grant, kind heav'n

That this stout oar may bear poor Ivan hence,
And I will prize it as a monarch's sceptre. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

Naritzin's Castle.

NARITZIN.

Narit. Wrong'd by Elizabeth! thy offspring!
thine,

Thou father of thy country!

Her, on whose brow this hand the diadem fix'd
Reft from the hapless Ivan! Judge of earth!

And must Naritzin's conscious lip confess

'Tis righteous retribution? Must I own

In bitterness of self-accusing misery

Th' eternal truth, "One deed unhallow'd teems
With woe engend'ring woe?" What now awaits
me?

Death, or drear exile, where Siberia's snows

Shall sepulchre my bones. Oh ! were it mine
Alone to suffer ! Hear me, Heaven ! on me,
Heap on this head thy fury ! Spare Petrowna !
Oh shield the innocent Ivan !

GALVEZ *enters.*

Galvez here !

Why thus uncall'd ? [*A shout heard.*]

Gal. My lord, and honour'd master,
Hark to the voice that loudly calls on you :
None, none shall injure you.

Narit. (*To GALVEZ*) Wherefore this tumult ?

Gal. All whom this isle contains, th'indignant
soldiers
Are risen to rescue you.

'Tis known to all,
That here, the woman whom thy pow'r exalted,
She who has basely wrong'd thee, and her minion,
The insolent Rimuni, meet this day
To seal thy condemnation.

[*Voices without.*] Comrades, on—
Our swords shall guard Naritzin.

Narit. [*to Galvez.*] Go, control
Their fury.

Gal. 'Tis in vain. Their rage inflam'd,
If you deny them audience, will break forth
In maddening insurrection.
Good, my lord,
Admit them to thy presence. Thou hast ever
Heard, and redrest their grievance. I beseech thee,
Vouchsafe them gracious hearing.

Narit. [to *Galvez.*] Give them entrance.

[*Exit Galvez.*

Yes, I will curb this tumult. Aid me, heav'n!
Make firm my mind, that I may yet withstand
This dread temptation!

FEODOR and Soldiers enter.

Wherefore here? Why, soldiers,
This tumult? Who has injur'd you?

Feo. My lord,
You they have injur'd, basely wrong'd you.—
Hear us:

Your rule has ever been most merciful:
Your kindness and humanity have sooth'd
Th'abode of horror: and while yet our hands
Have strength to wield a soldier's weapon, none
Shall force you from this isle.

Narit. Say, what thy purpose?

Feo. To rescue you from violence and wrong.

Nar. Thou, rescue me? Whence thy authority?

Feo. High heav'n, who wills not that the guilt-
less suffer,

The soul's resistless impulse to abase
Tyrannic pow'r.

Narit. Proud words but ill conceal
Disloyal deeds. Soldiers, obey: depart
Ere death repress your daring. Hence—

Sol. Speak, Feodor,
This is a righteous cause.

Feo. You see these veterans,

Men like myself, grey-headed, worn with service:
You know their gallant deeds.

Narit. Yes, oft have witness'd.

There's not a breast of those who now surround me
Undinted by brave wounds.

Feo. Shall then the chief

Who marshall'd us to conquest, fall a victim
To base suspicion? No: their brave right hands
Each on his sword, are pledg'd. Speak but the
word,

The cannon levell'd to announce the arrival
Of those weak tyrants, 'neath Ladoga's water
Shall plunge in all its bravery their galley
Ere it insult the fort.

Narit. I'll hear no more.

I am unarm'd, or I had plung'd my sword,
Bold rebel! in thy breast.

Feo. At will command us:

Naritzin's word needs not a sovereign's sanction.

Narit. If then Naritzin's word has pow'r, obey it.
None but myself can vindicate my honour.
Soldiers, your zeal betrays you. What your purpose?

To shield Naritzin from the iron grasp
Of merciless oppression? How? By deeds
Whose guilt and dire enormities outswell
The vile traducer's malice: deeds that cast
Round spotless loyalty the blood-stain'd garb
Of treason and rebellion. Here, first plunge
Your weapons, ere a mutinous arm be rais'd
To strike th'anointed brow. Revere your sov'reign!
Each to his home, in peace, and from Naritzin

PETROWNA *enters.*

Learn to submit. . . [FEODOR and Soldiers depart.
Petrowna here!

Pet. Submit!

Was that thy word? and did I rightly hear it?
Revenge! revenge! Oh! if thy wrongs, Naritzin,
Rouse not just vengeance, hear me—I implore
thee!

Hear me pour forth my inmost soul, and plead
For one in hopeless anguish, one by all
Abandon'd: one, on whom no sun by day,
Nor moon nor star by night, has sent its beam:
Who for the freshness of the vital air,
Drinks foul contagion, and for human utterance,
Hears but the echo rendering back the groan
That heav'd his bursting heart.—I plead for Ivan.

Narit. You wound my soul.

Pet. Is mine at peace? Free Ivan,
And fix him (for thou canst—thy word has pow'r)
King on his father's throne.

Narit. I crown'd Elizabeth,
The daughter of my lord and much lov'd master,
The father of his country. I enthron'd her,
Urge me no more.

Pet. Thou didst enthrone her! yes!
What thy reward? let base Rimuni answer.
Hear, and avenge! To thee, an injur'd nation
Lifts up her voice. Behold our far-fam'd realm,
That once, by Peter's godlike soul exalted,

Tower'd proudly eminent : as stateliest pine
That, rooted on the ice-cleft rock, outbraves
The war of winds, and, from its brow majestic,
Show'rs into dust impalpable the weight
Of winter's snows, — now droops beneath the
 gloom

Of luxury and sloth. Voluptuousness
Has mildew'd its fair growth ; stern tyranny
Lopt each brave shoot ; and foul corruption chang'd
Its sap and vital nutriment to poison,
Circling through all its veins.——Naritzin ! rise,
And crush th' usurper.

Narit. Oh that heav'n's wing'd fires
Had pierc'd my brow, or ere I had dethron'd
The unoffending child !

Pet. Restore him. Free
From anguish and remorse thy troubled spirit.

Narit. Hence ! lest I do a deed whose mere
 suggestion
Rives me with horror.

[Cannon and shouts heard.]

Heard you not that sound ?

Those shouts ? That roar of cannon ? 'Tis—

Pet. *[Interrupting him.]* Th' Usurper !

Narit. *[Shouts, and sound of cannon repeated.]*
Again !

Pet. That sound announces her arrival
This side the Neva.

Narit. Now awhile, Petrowna,
Farewell. I must prepare and arm my spirit—

Pet. *[Interrupting him.]* For insult, for op-
pression, for dire injuries

That mock the utterance ; hear my farewell word.
We may not meet again. Thou art the temple
Where honour dwells enshrined ; and shall thy
knee

Bend at Rimuni's beck—and must Petrowna
(Spare, spare me that disgrace!) look tamely on,
And see her lord lift vainly up the hand
That crown'd and uncrown'd kings, to that base
minion

A suppliant for pity !

Narit. Never ! never !

Bend to Rimuni ! lift to him this hand !
Rather its strength shall o'er yon rampart wave
War's crimson standard, and array the realm
In Ivan's cause. My power shall yet prevail—
Thro' me the voice of truth shall reach the throne
And silence the oppressor. I this day
Will lighten Ivan's doom ; yon sun this day
Shall see Naritzin or Rimuni perish.

Awhile farewell. [*Exit Naritzin.*]

Pet. Go thou where honour calls ;
Th' oppressor shall not triumph—Ivan reign !

A C T II.

SCENE I.

A subterraneous Vault leading to IVAN'S Cell.

PETROWNA *enters with a Lamp.*

Pet. Why comes not Mirovitz?
Revolt rings round the isle; where'er I pass,
Before me bursts the shout that bids Naritzin
Resist the usurper—while the weak Elizabeth
Leant on Naritzin's sacred word, my soul
Suppress its ardour; but Naritzin wrong'd,
Hope, that long slumber'd, like a giant springs
Fresh from repose, and urges on to action.
The glorious vision fires me; ne'er, till now,
Has bold imagination dar'd to shape
The righteous enterprise, that, still deferr'd,
Transfix'd my heart with agony, and bath'd
In secret tears my pillow. Ivan! Ivan!
Thou, o'er whose agonizing woe I hung;
Thou, whose harsh doom of unexampled suffer-
ings,
Whose very weakness and infirmity
Have link'd thee to my soul, Petrowna's hand
Shall cast thy fetters off, and lead thee forth
To liberty and empire.

MIROVITZ *enters.*

Mirovitz!

Miro. At your command I come ; be brief, I
pray you :
The island swarms with spies—I must not here
Be trac'd in secret conference—be brief.

Pet. Say, is it fix'd that you this night hold
watch
O'er Ivan ?

Miro. Yes.

Pet. Have you forewarn'd the guard ?

Miro. All sworn—delay me not ; what your
resolve ?

Pet. To fix on Ivan's brow the crown, or perish.
But, Mirovitz, o'er this day's close, o'er all
Dark doubt impends ; and, if once more th'
usurper

Should reinstate Naritzin—if once more
Rest on his word her throne, we must forego
The glorious hope, and Ivan, in yon cell,
Die unrevenged.

Miro. Knows Ivan thy resolve ?

Pet. E'en now I seek his cell, to arm his mind
To follow thee, if summon'd—now farewell—
But, ere you fix the guard, once more await me
In secret at the southern tower—(*as she is going*)
—farewell ! (*Exit PETROWNA.*)

Miro. I shall not fail—and deem'st thou, then,
proud woman,
I move but at thy bidding ? what to me
Naritzin's honour ? mine, my injuries claim
Revenge, that marks its character in blood—
The guard, to me devoted, at my word

This night will rescue Ivan—sure success,
Or death my doom. Be Ivan's mind but firm,
Elizabeth shall kneel at Ivan's throne. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

IVAN'S Cell, faintly illum'd with one central Lamp.

IVAN starts from his Couch, and follows, with
his eye, the Phantom of his Imagination.

Ivan. Avaunt, terrific vision! Hold my brain!
Com'st thou to warn me of approaching death;
Again in all thy horror reascend,
And I will hail thee, whatso'er thy nature,
The harbinger of Heaven:—again it floats—
Art thou a breathing form, like those that tenant
The upper world, and wander uncontrolled
In the free light of day? Speak!—

PETROWNA enters with a Lamp.

Pet. Ivan!

Ivan. Gone!

So perish Ivan! (*Throwing himself down.*)

Let me breathe my last
On these dark flints, and never, never more
Vex with my groan creation!

Pet. Ivan! Oh, answer me! He hears me not;
Or at the breath, the whisper of my word,
His voice had given kind welcome.

Ivan. (*starting up.*) Who art thou?
That onward glidest with seraphic brightness,

Illumining the gloom, and beaming on me
Rays of celestial pity?

Pet. 'Tis Petrowna.

Ivan. Ha! is it thou, Petrowna? None but thou?

Pet. There is none else.

Ivan. I pray you, turn your lamp,
There, steadily; no ray of light there gleams:
It may be lurking there.

Pet. What dost thou gaze on?

Ivan. (*alarmed*) Does not that lamp pass,
wav'ring, by thee?

Pet. Ivan!

Ivan. (*motioning with his hand*) So—it past,
wavering by me! Oh! Petrowna,
It was no shadow—no unreal phantom,
Such as oft haunt my troubled sleep: I saw it
Distinctly, as, now flaming there; that lamp
Past on before me, wavering—as borne
By some invisible arm. Behind it stalk'd,
With ponderous tread, a form of giant stature;
I could not trace its features: in its hand
A poignard gleam'd—and, ever and anon,
A shroud, that reek'd with blood drops, floated
round it.

On me the murderer sprang!—Yet, yet I hear
His hideous yell; I feel his iron grasp!

Give me thy hand. [*Catches her arm.*

Pet. Thy fever'd hand is fire:
And—now—the chill fit shakes thee.

Ivan. Raise me up;
My limbs sink under me!

Support me! [*Looking earnestly on her.*]

Ha! Petrowna! on thy eyelid

The tear-drop trembles. Why, why turn away?

Sure more than wonted gloom fills all the cell;

Or, if I rightly see, unwonted paleness

Has blanch'd thy cheek. Do not conceal aught
from me:

All, I can bear; all, suffer—save the pang

That preys on thee in secret.

Pet.

'Tis for thee

Alone I feel.

Oh! Ivan, calm thy soul; call Heav'n to aid thee.

The tongue of slander has traduc'd Naritzin;

Rimuni has accused him; and Michelovitz

O'er thee holds charge.

I know his secret soul; it honours thee.

Ivan! be calm: this day, to these sad haunts,

The minion, base Rimuni, and the empress——

Ivan. (interrupting her) Th' usurper! the fell
fiend, who wears my crown!

Pet. Awhile forego these thoughts: no pow'r
can save thee

If such rash words reach other ear than mine.

This day the empress comes, to doom, I fear,

My lord to exile; and, it may be, Ivan!

We ne'er shall meet again.

Ivan. Wing'd lightnings strike her!

Pet. Oh! give me patient hearing. It may
please

The sovereign, in her pride, to look on thee.

Ivan. Oh! never will her stern eye look again
On Ivan living.

Pet. Yet, if such her will,
Be mild, be gentle : then the menacing storm
May pass away unfelt.

Ivan. I will obey thee—
Would that I ne'er again might see that fiend !
No—let me but behold her, but in day-light
Stand up, and, front to front, pour in her heart
The gather'd fire that inwardly consumes me :
Then die.—Her gaze of insult shall not rest
Triumphantly on Ivan.

Pet. I implore thee,
I urge thee, Ivan ! by Petrowna's love,
By years of unremitted tenderness ;
I do entreat thee, by these tears, that gush
Like life drops from my heart——

Ivan. (*interrupting her*) Say, what thy wish ?

Pet. That thou, in presence of Elizabeth,
Suppress thy indignation.

Ivan. In her presence
Conceal my just abhorrence ! urge it not ;
I would not disobey thee.

Pet. Else, must perish
Petrowna's high rais'd hopes.

Ivan. Thine ! I will kneel before her.

Pet. Calmly hear me.
Fix in thy soul my words, there deep entomb them.
Strange men may here be seen : from all conceal
 them :
Chief from Naritzin.

Ivan. What thy hopes?

Pet. To fix thee

King on thy father's throne.

Ivan. Canst thou deceive me?

Pet. Thy hand shall wield the sceptre.

Ivan. (*with dignity.*) 'Tis my birthright.

My woes are all forgötten. Hear me, Heav'n!

Oh! let me, shielded by thy strength, extend

A hallowed sceptre o'er a willing realm,

And fix the column of a nation's pow'r,

A nation's glory, on th' immoveable base

Of private virtue; be, in blessing, blest:

So rightly execute the awful trust

Of thy anointed: and (oh! bliss of bliss!)

To be the minister of grace and mercy;

To lighten the sad load of human woe;

To rescue the oppressed; to search out

The world-abandon'd orphan, and the mourner

Who sighs in secret,—and then say, "Come forth!

"View, in your king, a father!" This, Petrowna!

Is to be god on earth.

Pet. Oh! King of kings!

Who in the soul of Ivan hast infus'd

A portion of thy spirit, guard from wrong

His sacred life!—Ivan! this night, 'tis fix'd——

Ivan. (*interrupting her*) This night!

Pet. One hour past midnight; thou, if sum-
mon'd,

Arise—no question ask—but dauntless follow

The voice that bids you forth: it summons you

To sovereignty, or death.

Ivan. Thou counsell'st it ;
 I shall not turn aside, though death confront me.
 Life! freedom! sovereignty! [*Transported.*]

Pet. Restrain this transport.

Ivan. Let me here vent it, or this heart will
 burst.

To what can I impart it, save these chains?

Pet. Not long shalt thou endure them. Now,
 farewell!

Ivan. One hour past midnight! freedom—
 sov'reignty! [*Embracing her.*]

Soother—deliverer—guardian-saint! Farewell!
 [*Exit PETROWNA.*]

SCENE III.

The Outward Fort.

MICHELOVITZ, MIROVITZ, FEODOR. *Soldiers
 under arms to receive the Empress.*

Mich. Oh! that the Neva, in its roaring waters,
 [*Aside to MIROVITZ.*]

Would their proud bark ingulph— [*Trumpets.*]
 Behold they come,
 Gay as in festal pomp. The sunbeams gild
 Their streamers, now bright waving in the wind,
 Now, as the light breeze falls, kissing in sport
 The many dimpled wave.

Miro. (aside.) Insulting pomp,
 That flares portentous on these drear abodes,
 Like some strange meteor, that with transient glare

Appals mankind. (*Trumpets.*) Yon trumpets
ceaseless clamour

Proclaims their entrance. (*Looking out.*)

Ha! Rimuni leads her :
Look how she leans on his proud arm, and smiles,
Delighted with his flattery !

*The Empress, RIMUNI, Senators, Guards,
Heralds, enter in State.*

Sol. (kneeling) Hail! long live
Elizabeth! our gracious sovereign!

Emp. Rise!

I thank your love, and will reward your zeal.

[*RIMUNI presenting MICHELOVITZ.*

Rim. Michelovitz, now warden of yon fortress,
More faithful than Naritzin, kneels before you.
Deign to vouchsafe him audience.

Mich. Gracious empress!

[*Laying various keys at her feet.*

These at your feet I lay—This guards the gate
That bars the outward fortress—This secures
All that the inward moat encircles—This,
The citadel—These close the prisoners' cells—
This from the eye of man, and light of heaven,
Hides Ivan.

Rim. (aside) Would the boy were dead!

Emp. Arise!

[*To MICHELOVITZ.*

Resume thy charge.

Miro. (aside to Feodor) We must avoid suspicion.

With seeming reverence we will kneel before her.

[*They kneel to the Empress.*]

Emp. Your suit—your names.

Rim. (advancing, interrupts them) Ungrateful to your ear:

This, Mirovitz. That, Feodor his brother;
Their ancestors of old were fam'd for power
And loyalty: but their rebellious father
Serv'd with Mazeppa, when that faithless chief
Leagued with our foes against your godlike sire.
The weight of his rebellion crush'd himself
And all his race.

Miro. We long in arms have serv'd you,
And shed our youthful blood in tented fields
Following your standard.

Rim. Vaunt not thus your duty.

Emp. Merit by loyal deeds our further favour.

Miro. We are your slaves.

[*Shouts heard at NARITZIN's approach.*]

Rim. (aside) The proud Naritzin comes.

NARITZIN enters, followed by PETROWNA closely veiled.—Soldiers kneeling to the Empress.

Sol. Look down with eye of favour on Naritzin!

Narit. Justice!

[*kneeling respectfully to the Empress.*]

Rim. It shall not be delayed.

Narit. Rimuni,

Not unto thee Naritzin deigns appeal.
Justice my royal mistress!

Emp. Sir, it grieves me
To see thee thus, here in the face of day
A man accus'd, before the public eye
Disgraced. I leant on thee, my Lord Naritzin!
As on the prop and column of my empire.

Narit. If e'er my zeal, I may not add my ac-
tions,
Your favour won, now in the public presence
Declare my crime.

Rim. Before the senate answer:
There hear thy condemnation.

Pet. (*aside to NARITZIN*) Condemnation!
Be firm—farewell. [*Exit PETROWNA.*

Narit. Hear, empress! on his death bed
Your sire, my much lov'd master, charg'd Na-
ritzin,

By many a wound, when side by side our swords
Bore conquest on their edge, that long as life
Yet lingered in these veins, I should uphold
The glory of his empire, nor desert
His royal offspring. Have I disobey'd
My sovereign's charge? let this distinguish'd
proof,

Your gift (*a diamond cross*) make answer: with
this high reward,

(When on your brow I fix'd the diadem)
You deign'd to honour me. Suspicion's breath
Must not with venomous taint pollute the breast
Grac'd by a monarch's favour. At your word,

This hand resign'd my sword, a monarch's
present :

Take back your gift (*the cross*) and grant Na-
ritzin's prayer :

Vouchsafe me one request, the plain demand
Of justice.

Emp. Speak !

Narit. That you, my gracious mistress,
Would deign your presence, when Naritzin pleads
Before th' assembled senate.

Rim. Proud Naritzin,
Mine is the grateful task to free the sovereign
From toils and cares of state : and I am charg'd
To search out your misdeeds.

Narit. I shall divulge
Truths bitter to thy soul, thou man of guilt.

Emp. Proclaim them—freely speak, thy sove-
reign bids thee.

Narit. The image of my lord and gracious
master,
The father of his country lives in you—
I may not here proclaim them. In your presence,
Before the senate, at their secret council,
All shall be fully told.

Emp. There, we will hear thee.
On to the council. There, my Lord Naritzin,
If guiltless, at my throne, before my presence
Stand unappalled. Thy sovereign is thy judge.

[*Exeunt.*]

A C T III.

SCENE I.

The Hall of Council.

*The Empress on her Throne, RIMUNI, Senators,
Guards, &c.*

Rim. Hear me, my royal mistress ! I entreat
you.

Add, I beseech you, lords ! your voice to mine ;
Let not Naritzin dare profane your presence ;
Let not the traitor wound his sovereign's ear
With insolent speech !

Emp. No more—my word is pledg'd :
A monarch's word is sacred. 'Tis the grace
Of sovereignty, its attribute, its blessing,
That mercy's angel hand should still incline
The scales by justice pois'd.

Rim. Naritzin never
Will sue for mercy—I entreat you, hear us :
Recal your word.

Emp. No, be his speech most harsh,
'Twill be less poignant far than self-reproach.
And, sir, his former services still live
Warm in my memory. Be my will obey'd :
Summon Naritzin.

Herald introduces NARITZIN.

You, my Lord Rimuni,
Search out his guilt. Yet first, Naritzin, hear me.
Deem not thy sovereign one, who, in the hour
Of injur'd majesty, no more retains
The sense and memory of deeds, long past,
Of loyalty and love. Say "I have wrong'd you;
"Your mercy I implore; forgive th' offence:"—
And thou shalt find that, in this injur'd bosom,
Mercy doth temper justice.

Narit. Gracious sov'reign!

For guilt which dreads its doom reserve thy mercy;
Justice alone I claim. My Lord Rimuni,
Of what am I accused?

Rim. Thou hast projected
Ivan's escape.

Narit. My heart has inly bled
For Ivan's sufferings.

Rim. To the charge make answer.

Narit. 'Tis false: yet, ere I here aloud pro-
claim

Truths that shall wound thy ear, and rive thy
heart,

The fame of my forefathers--the keen sense
And jealous feelings of a soldier's honour,
Now prompt my bold request: Deign, gracious
empress!

Deign briefly state, before this secret senate,
What once Naritzin's service.

My guilt, if such disloyalty be guilt,
I freely will disclose.

Emp. (rising) No trivial service.
When Ivan lay an infant in his cradle,
And the whole reign was tumult, Lord Naritzin
Dwelt on my father's fame, and crown'd my brow.
Why hast thou fix'd on me th' ungrateful office
To hear thy guilt? Does then thy heart no more
Glow at the name of my immortal sire,
Nor honour, in the sovereign of thy choice,
His living image?

Narit. Yes, most gracious empress!
Thou honour'd offspring of that glorious sov'reign,
Whose splendour, like the brightness of yon sun,
Illumin'd the wide world;—thus I adore [*Kneels.*
The memory of thy sire, and here in thee
Revere his hallow'd image. Not the less
I must lay bare my heart, and plead for Ivan—
That hapless prince!

Rim. Prince! rebel!

Nar. On thy brow
That word, base traitor! thou, who hast misus'd
Thy sov'reign's favour: else Naritzin's claims,
And Ivan's piercing cry, had reach'd the throne.
Oh! miserable realm! whose ruler yields
Th' intrusted rights and duties of the sceptre
To smooth-voic'd sycophants!—Rimuni! dread
An injur'd nation's vengeance.

Rim. If my zeal [*To the empress.*
E'er won thy favour, let my word confound
The traitor.

Emp. (To Rim.) Silence, sir.—(*To Narit.*)
You spake of Ivan :—

Proceed.

Narit. Ere this base flatterer gain'd your favour,
(Pardon the word) the prince, at his stern man-
date,

Was forc'd away, and dragg'd from fort to fort,
I know not whither, nor by what rude hands,
Till in yon cave Rimuni's sentence sepulchred
The unoffending victim.

Rim. Ha!

Emp. (To Narit.) Proceed.

Narit. When Ivan's wrongs rang loud on every
tongue,

And the deep woe, which fill'd each heart, in mine
Was guilt and condemnation ; then, before me,
Like a tormenting spirit, day and night,
The image of the youth, by me dethron'd,
Lone in the dungeon, vilely chain'd, in tortures,
Rose ceaselessly ; nor ever fail'd the sting
Of conscience here to lodge its gather'd venom,
Till the sharp goading of remorse compell'd me,
In expiation of the offence, to claim
This dreadful charge : and here to dedicate,
To solitude and sad obscurity,
The closing of a day whose dawn was glory—
Yet wholly not unblest, so Heav'n vouchsaf'd me
To shield the helpless from the oppressor's wrong,
And haply soothe, if ought on earth might soothe,
The sufferings of the wrong'd, the outrag'd Ivan.

Rim. Wrong'd, outrag'd Ivan!

Lords. Treason.

Emp. (*To the Lords.*) Peace! be silent!

I too have human feelings—human pity.

Narit. Outrag'd! I spake the word—look at
this charge.

(*Takes a paper from his bosom.*)

I would not, for thy sake, my gracious mistress,
Before the public eye produce this deed.

Emp. My Lord Naritzin! this imparts my honour.

Proclaim aloud the charge.

Rim. Ha!

(*Aside.*)

Narit. “Guard this Ivan,

“Close fetter'd—in a dungeon's cell immure him,

“Far from the light of day, and every eye,

“Save thine; such food, as nature craves, be his.

“His mind is brutaliz'd: by means that tame

“The stubborn brute, subdue his savage mood.”

Emp. (*To Rim.*) These were thy words.

Narit. (*Holding it before her.*) The sovereign's
hand has sign'd it.

Lo! here, the name Elizabeth subscribed.

Emp. My name! oh, Heaven!

I will'd that Ivan should be close immur'd;—
Not harshly tortur'd.

Narit. (*Kneels.*) Hear me.

Emp. Wherefore kneel?

Arise!

Narit. Vouchsafe me audience: if this hand
First crown'd your brow; if first I hail'd you em-
press,

Have pity upon Ivan. From this scroll
 Blot out the stain and character of blood :
 Not of that fiend,—of thy own heart take counsel :
 Then, in the splendour of your sire's renown,
 His sceptre wield : and, oh ! permit that Ivan,
 The wrong'd, the outrag'd, unoffending Ivan,
 May in some cloister's sanctuary pass
 Life's tranquil day. The peace, the public weal,
 The throne's stability, your sacred life,
 Claim justly such restraint ; but all beyond
 Ruthless oppression.

Rim. Dar'st thou thus proclaim it
 Before thy sovereign's presence ?

Narit. Sir, I speak
 Under the terror of no earthly power :
 There reigns my Judge. *(pointing up.)*

Emp. My Lord Rimuni, silence.

Narit. If haply to have sooth'd, by tend'rest
 cares,

Him whom my pow'r dethron'd, be deem'd a crime,
 Be on my head that guilt ! The blest offence
 Will whisper peace to my departing soul.
 The cell, 'tis true, has Ivan's dwelling been ;
 Nor other eye than mine, save one, on earth,
 Has ever glanc'd upon him.

Rim. Ha ! another. *(Aside)*

Mark'd you his word, dread sovereign ?

Emp. *(To Narit.)* Who ? declare it.

Narit. Petrowna ! from her lip, day after day,
 E'en in the tomb that sepulchre's the living,
 Ivan has learnt the words of wisdom :—learnt

How best to conquer passion—and imbib'd
The balm of heav'nly solace, which religion
Mingles in misery's chalice.

Rim. (Interrupting him, aside to the Empress.)

The brute, Ivan,
Of cultur'd reason! 'tis most perilous.
Not vain the warning: were this widely rumour'd;
Were it but whisper'd in the public ear,
The realm would rise in arms. My gracious
sovereign!

Bid hence the senate: I beseech you, hear me.

Emp. My spirit is sore troubled.

Rim. I intreat you

Let me dismiss them: loyal though they seem,
They must not share this council.

Emp. Bid them hence.

Rim. My lords! awhile retire.

(They and NARITZIN depart.)

Emp. What now thy counsel?

Rim. It was no idle rumour reach'd your throne
Of Ivan's followers, and projected rescue:
All is confirm'd, and—but you do not heed me.

Emp. Be brief.

Rim. Your throne—your sacred life's at hazard;
Be judge yourself. Before you, face to face,
Bid forth the boy, and witness what his nature.
His nature! who can doubt it? Aptly tutor'd—
All mildness—all submission; but beware.
Sudden, in full-grown strength, athirst for vengeance,

The lion from his secret lair will spring,
And crush you in his fury.

Emp. How prevent it?

Rim. Were the boy dead, then would your soul
know peace.

There are—I know the man—whose loyal zeal
Would rid you of this fear.

Emp. By murder! never.

Rim. You—or the boy.

Emp. Oh! heap not on my soul
That added guilt.

Rim. Think not Rimuni's nature
Inclines to deeds of blood: the sacred duty
To guard your life compels me.

Emp. Spare me! spare me!

Rim. I wish not Ivan's death: but say, where
breathes

On earth—I do not know that living man—
On whom my soul, in fearless confidence,
Can rest such perilous charge.

Emp. Yes: one I know,
In whom I firmly trust.

Rim. Then I conjure you,
Bind on his soul, by Heav'n attested vows,
This solemn charge:—to stab without remorse
The boy, if fraud or force attempt his rescue.

Emp. Bid Lord Naritzin, in yon cloister'd cell,
Attend my presence.

Rim. Lord Naritzin!

Emp. Speed!

Bid him there wait my presence; and I charge you,
Yea, at the hazard of my deep displeasure,
Let none approach the spot. My will is fix'd :
Reply not ; be thy sovereign's word obey'd.

(*Exeunt.*)

SCENE II.

IVAN'S *Prison.*

Cannon heard at a distance.

Ivan. Again ! Methought it was the cannon's
roar :

I heard it ; 'tis the voice of their rejoicing.
On the huge bolts and bars, that intercept
My passage to mankind, a jarring sound
Burst—like the crash of thunder, when vext
earth

Echoes the voice of heaven. So let them brawl
To the wide world their gladness in brief clamours,
That die upon the winds : my exultation,
To earth, to human ear inaudible,
Shall, at the throne of Heaven, be heard, and call
Th' avenger to attest it. How conceal it ?
Light, freedom, empire ! 'twas Petrowna spake it.
Flame like the sun, dull lamp !—ye flints ! be
robed

With flowers of vernal breath ;—and thou, drear
cave !

That ne'er hast heard sounds other than despair ;
Thou too, re-echoing the strange voice of joy,
Shalt swell my exultation.

NARITZIN *enters.*

Narit. Ivan—

Ivan. Thou! Here—

Narit. Yes, ruthless tho' their natures,
None, so entreated, could deny my pray'r
To bid thee here farewell. I ne'er again
Shall witness thy dire anguish : ne'er again
Share and assuage thy woe.

Ivan. Come to my arms—

Ere thou didst guard me, they who rack'd my
limbs
Made mockery of my groans—turn not away :
Thou hast been kind to Ivan.

Nar. Kind! the rous'd viper's poisonous fang
less cruel :—

Oh had it pleased high Heav'n
Or ere thy birth in mercy to have swept me
From off the living realm, thy hand had wielded
The sceptre of thy sires, and I had lain
In peace within my grave!

Ivan. (*embracing him*) Thus I forgive thee.
The tears that bathe thy cheek have cleans'd thy
crime. (*to himself.*)

Oh! I could soothe at once his soul to peace—
I may not now reveal it.

Nar. What?

Ivan. Defy them—

Yes, they will banish thee, because thy heart
Shudders to act their cruelties :—defy them—
How glorious thy return! I will exalt

Petrowna's consort next myself in pow'r.
How! if it fail? well—well—no tear again;
Tears, such as trickle when an infant weeps,
Shall tell of Ivan's woe. The torturing fiends
Misus'd the helpless infant, but the man
None ever shall dishonour. Oh Naritzin!
I have subdued the spirit that within me
Burnt with unquenchable fire: and why subdued?
Thy kindness, thy humanity o'erpower'd me.
I am not what I was—misuse me now!
Let them beware. At the oppressor's sight
My heart would kindle into flame, and Ivan
Avenge himself or perish. *(footsteps heard.)*

Nar. What that sound?

(Rimuni behind the Scenes.) Naritzin!

Ivan. Whose that voice?

Nar. 'Tis he! Rimuni.

RIMUNI *enters.*

Ivan. That serpent!

Narit. *(endeavouring to prevent Rimuni's entrance.)* Enter not.

Rim. I will behold him.

Ivan. Heav'n! vengeance! vengeance!
(to himself.)

Rim. *(considering Ivan)* Stern his threatening
brow.—

Naritzin—haste, the empress waits thy coming.

Ivan. *(with affected calmness to Rimuni)* Stay
yet awhile—the scene will glad thy soul—

Survey this haunt congenial to thy nature.

Stay man (*Stopping him*)—the serpent, that in
upper air

Basks sweltering in the blaze of day, slinks back
To lurk in caves obscure that feed his venom—

Nay, gaze around.—

Narit. Peace, Ivan!

Rim. (*aside*) Taunting boy :

Yes, I will know thy nature, and subdue it.

Ivan. (*calmly takes the lamp, and directs the
light to several places*) Look on these
damps—this pestilential dew,

That, drop by drop, bursts on the moldering stone

That wears away beneath it :—'tis my breath

Has fed it—look upon these rugged flints—

Nay, closely mark them.—See you not the trace

Worn by the ceaseless tread of my lone feet

Year after year? They are th' eternal marks,

That on th' inanimate rock to after times

Shall grave thy cruelty. Now, if thou canst,

Look on the marks that character the living.

Rim. (*aside*) Yes, he shall die.

Ivan. (*holding up the lamp to his own counte-
nance*) Look on these orbs of vision, tem-
per'd down

To the dull glimmer of this feeble lamp :

These, at my birth, the great Creator gifted

With power and capability, at once

With one swift glance to sweep the vault of
heaven,

Earth rob'd in beauty, and the vast expanse

Of waves that heave huge ocean's amplitude.
Look on this cheek, despair's sharp cankerworm
Has robb'd it of its roseate bloom, and cast
On youth the wan and spectry hue of age:
These limbs too, scarce have strength to bear
me up ;

But, feeble as they are, at sight of thee,
I feel in each brac'd sinew strength and power
To rend thee into atoms. [*violently seizes him.*]

Rim. (*drawing a dagger*) Perish first.

Narit. No traitor! (*staying him.*)

Rim. Help, Ho! guards, help! rescue! rescue!
(*Ivan runs, and bars the door, and snatches
the dagger.*)

Ivan. The iron door is barr'd—now! ha! ha!
ha!

Rim. Oh mercy!

Narit. Ivan! hold: or instant death
In torturing flames consumes us.

Ivan. (*drops the dagger*) Thou in torture
For Ivan's deed? away thou fiend! delay not—
The mercy, thou hast found, to others yield:
Begone—avoid my sight,
Hence! tell the usurper in this cell of horror
I o'er thee stood, the dagger in my grasp
Nor struck the blow—then, for thou canst, com-
mand her

To free—no, fix on Russia's throne crown'd Ivan.
[*Exeunt Narit. and Rim.*]

END OF ACT III.

A C T I V.

SCENE I.

*The Cloisters.*EMPRESS *and* NARITZIN.

Emp. My Lord Naritzin ! on thy faith I rest :
I shall pour forth, as truth and nature urge,
My secret soul before thee—oh ! I would
That I had never wielded in this hand
The sceptre reft from Ivan ! since that hour,
However outwardly I bear my pomp,
And arm my brow with confidence, within
Fear and suspicion, that nor day nor night
Have rest, possess me.

Narit. Whom have you to fear ?

Emp. My successor—I gave the dire example.
Yet more, I dread thy charge, the prisoner, Ivan ;
But yesterday I did despise the boy,
I rank'd him with the very herd that crop
The grassy clod—thy voice, the senate heard it,
Profusely blazoned forth his praise—the realm
Once hail'd him king, and I before him bow'd
First of his titled slaves.

Narit. You are his sovereign !
And on your word his weal or woe depends.
Give him to breathe the air that breathes on all,
And gaze upon the blessed light of heaven :

Mistake me not, it is not my request
That you should rashly free him to the gaze
And shout of the capricious people—no!—
Let him have commerce with religious men,
Where he may safely harbour, bind his soul
By rigid vows all dedicate to heaven,
And to the general voice that shouts thy name,
Ivan will add his blessing.

Emp. No, I dare not,
Young as he is, and beautiful, and mild;
Compassion for his fate would gather strength
That must o'erturn my throne. I dare not free
him,

Yet—I would fain that Ivan breath'd in peace:
Thou canst secure it. Is it thy desire
To lighten Ivan's misery?

Narit. By my own.

Emp. Naritzin, re-assume the charge of Ivan;
Assuage his misery: where'er thou art
Throughout the day, long as thou hold'st the rule
Of this dread fort, be at thy side the youth,
E'en as a son most lov'd: yet still, at night fall,
Closely immure him in th' imprisoning cell.
This be his doom: so thou yon heaven attest
That thy firm hand, shall in his bosom plunge
This weapon, (*presenting a dagger*) if or fraud or
force again

Attempt his rescue.

Narit. I refuse the charge.

Emp. This sacred dagger at Pultowa sav'd

My sire, thy lord, from death : this now shall
save

His daughter, by thy patriot zeal enthron'd.

Narit. Recal thy pardon, reassume thy honours ;

Forget the vow, that never blood should stain

Thy sceptre ; be Naritzin's bold disloyalty

By death aveng'd—I will not touch that dagger.

Emp. Reflect, a thousand arms, a thousand
daggers,

Will vindicate thy sovereign : force me not

On deeds of blood : fain would my soul avoid
them.

Thy sovereign sues—commands thee—take it—
Ivan

Lives but to bless Naritzin : thy refusal

Is Ivan's instant death.

Narit. Not on my head

Be innocent blood.

Emp. (*to a guard without*) Bid Lord Rimuni
hither.

Narit. A moment's pause ;—I know his ruthless
nature.

Emp. Bid Lord Rimuni hither—speed.

Narit. Yet stay :

Rimuni, or Naritzin—now shall perish.

Pledge but your word, and I accept the charge.

Emp. What thy intent ?

Narit. Your fame—a nation's weal.

Swear, ere another sun shall light the world,
For ever from th' indignant realm to banish

Rimuni—Are you silent? Plunge the dagger,
Murd'ress, in Ivan's heart: so to your grave
Go down, with charge of blood upon your brow:
So, in your sin, at Heaven's dread call, arise
Before the King of kings.

Emp. Ere yonder sun
Resumes his course, Rimuni flies the realm.
Take thou this weapon. (*He takes it.*

Narit. Ivan shall not reign.

Emp. Receive thy sov'reign's thanks—o'er po-
pulous Ingria
Thy government extends.

Narit. I seek no honours.

[*Drawing the dagger.*

As yet thou art unstain'd with innocent blood.
Let me depart.

Emp. Yet hear me—stay—thy sovereign,
Ere sun-set quits the isle: but, ere I leave
For ever this abode of woe and horror,
My lord, I must hold conference with Ivan.

Narit. Not, I implore you, ere you have made
known

Your purpose to Petrowna.

Emp. Why?

Nar. Her voice

Tempers at will his spirit; her fix'd glance
Holds magic influence o'er him.

Emp. Say, thy sovereign
Commands her to her presence.

Narit. I beseech you,
With tenderness, with pity, question Ivan—

And, I implore you, spare Petrowna's ear
This charge of murder: hide from her the vow
That past my lips. From Ivan's doom'd assassin
Her eye would turn abhorrent.

Emp. Trust my caution.

Haste, bid her hither. *[Exit Naritzin.]*

Ha! her voice! her glance!

Hold magic influence o'er him! 'Tis most palpable:

Tutored by her—and who, but this Petrowna,
Has Ivan's misery sooth'd?—his weal, his woe,
Not mine, her spirit sways. My throne, my life,
Rests on this woman: 'tis most hazardous.
The boy now ripens into man, with manhood,
Ambition, vengeance, his acknowledg'd claim
To rule, will rouse unconquerable thoughts.
All must be plainly told: the husband's vow
Must yoke the wife: so shall Petrowna quench
Each latent spark that glows in Ivan's bosom,
And I in peace repose.

PETROWNA enters.

Pet. My Lord Naritzin

Bade me attend your presence.

Emp. On his faith

My favour rests.

Pet. Methought unwonted gloom

Darken'd his cheek, as swift he hurried on,
To hide in loneliness thoughts ill at ease.

Emp. I know the cause: and it doth much import thee

To feel its force: his sov'reign to his pray'r
Bow'd gracious, when thy lord at once to lighten
The doom of Ivan, and to drive Rimuni
For ever from this realm——

Pet. (interrupting her) Belov'd Naritzin!
Heaven on thy head his choicest treasures shower.

Emp. Vow'd to prevent, by death, the prisoner's flight,
If fraud or force should ere attempt his rescue—
You mark my words.

Pet. Too plainly.—Murder Ivan!

Emp. His vow is ratified in Heaven.

Pet. Say rather,
Where dæmons howl in torture.

Emp. Hear, Petrowna!
Thy sov'reign speaks.

Pet. (to herself) Naritzin murder Ivan!
It shall not be!

Emp. Fain would I see the youth!
Hold converse with him, and myself observe
If rumour basely has degraded him
To the low level of a senseless brute;
Or, as Naritzin vaunted it, if Ivan
Be grac'd with high endowments.

Pet. (aside) Oh, my soul!
'Tis as I fear'd—her eye shall not glance on him:
If fear can curb, or pity melt the heart,
Thou shalt not look on Ivan!

Emp. Not look on him!

Pet. Where? on what spot of earth wouldst
thou confront him?

Emp. I understand thee not—explain thy meaning.

Pet. Where meet him?—in the cell that drinks his groan?

Emp. No, rather in the sepulchre of death.

Pet. Here! in the light of day, beneath heaven's beam,

Canst thou, with still unswerving eye, sustain
The lightening of his eye, when fixt on thine?

Do not again behold him!

Emp. Here conduct him.

Pet. Oh, never, never more, thy tear will fall
As once upon his cheek.

Emp. Oh!

Pet. Thou hast reign'd
Triumphant; revelry, and joy, and feast,
Shouts of applause, and all that earth most envies,
Have made thy throne their dwelling: Think on
Ivan.

Do your tears fall?—Turn not away: they fall
Accepted offerings to offended Heaven:
And every tear, mingled with penitence,
Will wash and cleanse from off thy secret soul
A spot of deep pollution.—Nature form'd thee
Kind, gentle, generous.

Emp. Presumptuous woman!
What prompts thee, rashly daring to address
Thy sov'reign thus?

Pet. This. (*Her heart*) I have wept at mid-
night
O'er Ivan's flinty couch, and quak'd to hear,

When all was still, his shriek of agony.
'Tis that makes me bold, and bids my voice
Thus warn you—hold not conference with Ivan.
At sight of thee, who from his brow hast reft
The crown his fathers wore, whose stern command
Has rob'd his day of light—whose ruthless ministers

Have rack'd his tender limbs—will not the fiend
Rouse him to madd'ning horror? thou hast heard it:
If then, instructed thus in Ivan's nature,
Thy will is fixed to commune lonely with him.,
I must not be far distant.

Emp. I will see him—
Lead Ivan to yon cloisters—speed—reply not.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

The Cave of the Conspirators.

MIROVITZ—FEODOR—CONSPIRATORS.

1st Cons. (to MIROVITZ) Detain us not; most
dangerous this delay.
Now fix the hour; give each his separate charge.
But if you doubt our faith——

Miro. I doubt you not.

1st Cons. On—to the altar lead us:
There pledge our souls to Ivan's cause; there bind us
To slay who e'er withstands his sov'reign's rescue.

Miro. Hear then my last resolve.
You know the tyrannous custom of this fort:

Month after month fresh troops the isle surround,
And, night by night, new guards keep watch and
ward

Round Ivan's cell. This night that charge is ours.
Now, one by one, pledge your brave hands with
mine.

I, when the hour strikes twelve relieve the watch.

(Selecting two in turn.

You, guard the outward draw-bridge; you, the
gates

Of the first tower; the inner draw-bridge your's;
Your charge, the inner fort; you guard the vaults
That wind through ways obscure to Ivan's cell;
You nigh his cell take station; thine, my brother,
The eastern turret; o'er its crested brow . . .

(Be watchful :) If all favour our design,
At stroke of one, a lighted beacon raise:
Wave it distinctly thrice; at the third signal
We rush to Ivan's cave. The sail now waits
My summons, o'er Ladoga's Lake to waft us
To liberty, to wealth, to fame, to honour.

[Exeunt.

SCENE III.

The Cloisters.

EMPRESS.

Emp. How is it with me? what strange fear
appals?

Where 'er I turn, some victim of oppression

Starts up, methinks, before me, and aloud
Cries vengeance—ere yon westering sun descends
I will depart: I would not here be found
When nature seeks repose—hark! hark a foot-
step!

No; 'twas my fear—why did I wish to see
The injured Ivan? what is my intent?
That I myself should witness what his nature?
How judge? when horror fills my inmost soul?

[*a footstep heard*]

I hear them: 'tis a footstep: it draws near—
Oh! spirit of my father!—be thou present!
Sustain thy drooping child!

Pet. (behind the scenes.) Ivan!

Emp. I heard her:

It was Petrowna's voice, how mildly sweet!
So a fond mother welcomes in her child.

Pet. (without) Lean on me—do not linger—
gaze no more

On yon bright orb. [IVAN enters, looking back,
leaning on PETROWNA.

Ivan. Was that the blessed sun
That lights the spacious world? yon orb of fire?
Say, can you stilly gaze on it, Petrowna,
With unaverted eye? mine it o'erpowers,—
All, all is darkling round me! oh support me!

Petr. Lean closer on me.

Ivan. (looking back again) Though it pains my
sight,

Let me again behold it!

Pet. Turn not, Ivan!

The empress is before you.

Emp. (to herself.) Hapless youth!

How hast thou suffered!

Ivan. Oh that piercing air!

You said it would be pleasant to my sense;

But it comes shivering o'er me, keenly chill;

Yet is its breath most sweet; aid me, Petrowna!

My limbs sink under me. I pray thee hide me

In the dark dungeon. Let me not behold her.

Pet. Remember thou thy promise—kneel, implore

Her mercy.

Ivan. 'Tis thy will—lead—lead me to her.

Still on my sight the dazzling sun beams flash.

Where is the empress?

Emp. (aside as IVAN slowly advances.) Fair indeed his form!

Of port commanding!—Ivan!

Ivan. Whose that voice?

'Tis harsh unto mine ear. Speak, speak, Petrowna.

Pet. The empress graciously her hand extends

In sign of kindness. I entreat you, Ivan,

Implore her pity.

Ivan. I will kneel before her: [kneels]

Not for myself I sue thee, hear my prayer!

Emp. I am not of harsh mood. Witness these tears!

Pet. Must I retire?

[to the Empress.]

Emp. Leave me not alone with Ivan!
Yet his no brutal nature.

Ivan. Scorn me not!

Emp. I cannot longer gaze upon his face:
Lead him away.

Ivan. No, not till thou hast heard me.

Emp. What would'st thou?

Ivan. And hast thou the heart to ask it?

Emp. Take, take him hence.

Ivan. No, to thy knees I cling:
None but thyself can give my bosom peace.
I do entreat thee, as thou lov'st the heavens
That on thy brow have showered felicity,
Vouchsafe reply! live they? my wretched pa-
rents?

Emp. They live!

Ivan. And is their life—

Pet. (*interrupting him*). Oh! ask no more!

Ivan. Like Ivan's? how! you answer not!
have mercy!

Have mercy. 'Tis for me alone they suffer.
Oh free them—wear my crown, and leave me here,
To Heaven and to Petrowna.

Pet. Calm, assuage
The anguish of his spirit!

Emp. (*to herself*.) Oh that the voice of truth
had reach'd my ear,
That I had known his gentle nature! Ivan
Hast thou no other prayer? none for thyself?
Speak, dread me not.

Ivan. What should I dread? Behold me.

What more have I to suffer? Dark and deep
My dwelling, far from human sight and sound,
And the sepulchral roof that closes o'er me,
The bound that parts the living from the dead.

Emp. It wounds my soul. *[aside.]*

Ivan. The elements alone
In their illimitable sweep had power
To interrupt my solitude : and oft,
From unendurable loneliness aroused,
I have giv'n answer to the voice of winds
That heav'd the roaring waves ; and I have leapt
In transport from my flinty couch ; to welcome
The thunder as it burst upon my roof,
And beckon'd to the lightning, as it flash'd
And sparkled on these fetters, while in vain
I proffer'd where the volley fiercely blaz'd,
My forehead to its death stroke.

Emp. 'Tis too horrible !

Pet. No, not the roar of winds, the thunder's
crash,

The inward whisper of a guilty spirit
Alone is insupportable.

Ivan. Yet hear me !

Not for myself I sue thee, 'tis for them
My bosom bleeds, for them—my wretched parents,
Imprison'd for my crime ; the crime, that Ivan
Was born to rule. Waste not in vain lament,
Waste not on me unfruitful tears. I know
My hapless doom, and am prepar'd to suffer.
But pity those who mourn the living Ivan,
And call the day accurst, which gave to light

Me, their first-born. Pause you? your silence kills.

Scorn not these tears!

Pet. I dread what may ensue—

You heeded not his prayer—rage knits his brow.

Ivan. Thou, called a God on earth, hast thou no mercy?

Pet. His agitated bosom labours high

With violence unwonted— [to the Empress.

I exhort you—

Avoid his sight.

Emp. The voice of majesty

Shall curb his rage—Ivan!

Pet. Not thus address him!

Not with loud voice of stern command! Hear
Ivan!

Withdraw— [to the Empress.

His cheek is fire—his eye darts flame.

Emp. (on IVAN'S approach.) Ivan—

'Tis vain; he heeds me not.—Petrovna, here,
Stand thou between us, 'tis thy sovereign calls
On thee for aid.

Pet. Stay, Ivan.

Ivan (approaching the Empress.) Thou, the
usurper!

Is this the crowned brow? let me behold it:

I will confront its terrors. Who art thou

Mortal! that mock'st omnipotence? Who thou

That in the hollow of thy right hand grasp'st

Yon orb of light, and with thy left hast yok'd

The freedom of the winds: and cri'st aloud,

“ Sun, shine not thou on that devoted head !
“ Nor let thy pure breath, unimprison’d air !
“ Make cool those fever’d temples!” Let me
trace

The signature and majesty of Heaven
Stamp’d on thy front.

Emp. (sinking on her seat.) Help—I am faint—
support me.

Pet. Ivan!—He hears me not. I ne’er have
witness’d

Such violence and rage. He knows me not—
’Tis past control.

[IVAN’S passion gradually rising to frenzy.]

Ivan. Turn not away! Behold me!

What trace I on that brow? woe—terror—shame!
Where now thy power, thy sov’reignty o’er Ivan?
Usurper!—from thy temples lift the crown,
And fix it on my brow—and at my feet
Seek pardon. Give the sceptre to my wielding:
Mark its just use. Haste!—ope the prison
gates—

Lo! how they issue forth, faint, pale, afraid
To look upon the light! Lo! how they creep
Bow’d down on the strange earth, like beings
unused

To gaze on heaven with man’s erected front!

[to the Empress.]

Why dost thou weep, is it for me?—for Ivan?
I took thee for the Empress. Ha! who art
thou—?

Thou,—thou my mother! Oh I knew thee
not.

They long have sever'd us. Come to my arms :
O shield me from that torturer—Shield thy child.

Pet. Ivan! it is Petrowna!

Ivan. (*struggling with* PETROWNA.) Off barbarian!

They ne'er shall part us more! Come, you shall
hear [*embracing the Empress.*

Strange tales of Ivan—to my prison stole
A monk, a wily man, long years of suffering
Have since toil'd by, and the swoll'n wave, I saw
it,

Foam'd o'er him—mark how he allur'd my boy-
hood :

He told me I should wander in green fields,
And wreath fresh flowers and garlands, where
gay birds

Sing in their bowers, and gurgling streamlets wind
Thro' sunshine glades their many dimpled rills :
But 'twas to plunge me deeper—deeper down
In midnight darkness. (*to* PETROWNA.)

Hence, thou fiend away!

Why, why pursue me to this sunless cave?

Is this too thy doom'd haunt?

Emp. (*to* PETROWNA) Loose not thy hold.

Ivan. (*to the Empress.*) Weep not dear mother!
by thy tears I know thee :

Haply thou know'st not Ivan ; nor this flesh
So strangely mangled : 'twas not thus, when first

Thy tear of joy gush'd on the new-born babe.
But never shall the torturers vex us more.
Hush! hush! no ear must hear it, 'twas Petrowna,
Not that false monk that spoke of freedom—em-
pire!

Hush! hush!

Emp. Ha!

Petro. Heed not! these are words of frenzy!

Emp. (to PETROWNA.) Forget not the dread
oath!

Ivan. (to the *Empress.*) Nay, be at rest,
Cloud not thy brow, the usurper shall implore
Forgiveness, and kneel prostrate at our footstool.
[struggling with PETROWNA.]

Off! off! fell fiend!

Emp. Let him not 'scape thy arms!

Ivan. I can no more resist— strike not again!

Pet. Ivan! he falls exhausted prone on earth.

[IVAN falls.]

Ivan. Once, twice, they murder me in prison.
Help!

Strike at th' anointed brow—beware, fell fiend!
The eye of Heaven is on you.

Pet. Ivan! Ivan!

It is Petrowna clasps thee in her arms.

My voice has reach'd him.

Ivan. (recovering.) Is it thou, Petrowna?
A fearful vision had disturb'd my sense.

Emp. Hide him from me for ever. From this
isle

I haste ! farewell ! think on Naritzin's oath.

[*exit Empress.*]

Ivan. My limbs sink under me—support me.

Pet. Ivan

Lean on me : in these arms once more find
peace.

END OF ACT IV.

A C T V.

SCENE I.

The North Ramparts.

MIROVITZ and FEODOR.

Feo. The midnight hour is past—Say Miro-
vitz,

Are all resolv'd ?

Miro. At one we rescue Ivan ;
Success must crown th' attempt.

Feo. But how deceive
Naritzin's search ?—his unremitting zeal
Visits throughout the fort, from cell to cell,
The nightly watch !

Miro. His unremitting zeal!
How fruitless!—all, e'en to suspicion's eye
Shall seem secure

Feo. But does Petrowna yield
Unforced assent, now that her lord resumes
Th'entrusted charge?

Miro. Petrowna is deceived:
And deems forsooth the glorious enterprise
At her command, abandoned. Ere I fix'd
The guard, my feign'd compliance stilled her fear.
Her fear! what reck's it? Unrelenting vengeance,
Kind fortune, and the fav'ring hour invite—
These now neglected, say what hope, hereafter?
All now is fixed, and years on years may pass
Ere men, so leagued, here meet—it must succeed;
At the high altar I have bound their souls
To free their King.

RIMUNI enters.

Ha! at this hour! what spy
Here basely lurks?—thy name—thy purpose—
speak!

Rim. Rimuni!—vengeance!

Miro. 'Tis confirm'd—I know it,
That thou art like myself, a man disgrac'd;—
The sunshine, whose meridian blaze illum'd thee,
Is suddenly eclipsed.

Rim. For ever set.
Yet not the less, e'en in the senate lurk,
Men to my will devote: brave men, who scorn

The weak usurper : lords of might and power
To 'stablish on the empire of his sires
The sovereign of thy choice.

Miro. My choice? whom?

Rim. Ivan!

Elizabeth is hateful to thy soul ;
Take my pledg'd hand : perish Elizabeth !
Command this weapon,—I have basely wrong'd
thee ;

Yet if the galling yoke of dire oppression,
The bond of common suff'ring, can unite
Brave men who brook not wrong, lo ! one, whose
hand

Fears not to execute the boldest deed
Thy spirit dares conceive.

Miro. The proof now waits thee :
Thou at my side attend :—be bold—be faithful—
If faithless, dread my vengeance.—Feodor,
On to the eastern tower.

Feo. I shall not fail.
Farewell.

[*Exit* FEODOR.]

Miro. Speed hour of vengeance !—if we fail,
Better to perish boldly, than contemn'd
Live unavenged. Success or death awaits us.

SCENE II.

PETROWNA'S *Apartment.*

Petro. Hark ! 'tis the hour's loud chime,
'twixt twelve and one.

'Tis past his wonted hour, why stays Naritzin?
Some unforeseen event——perchance——some
tumult?——

Merciful heaven, Woliskoff?

WOLISKOFF *enters.*

Wolis. Did I hear thee?

Petro. Say,—is thy Lord returned?

Wolis. No, gracious lady;
Since Mirovitz departed, none,—no foot
Has past the gate.

Petro. Let Galvez now go forth
And bid him speed, I charge you; bid him speed
And bring swift tidings of thy Lord's approach.

[*Exit* WOLISKOFF.]

'Tis horrible——premeditated murder!
Naritzin shuns my presence, and avoids
Bleak tho' the storm, and late th' ungenial hour
This sheltering roof.—His painful charge, as wont,
Urg'd him to visit in their cells ere midnight,
The entrusted prisoners.—Has he looked on Ivan?
And told the victim that Petrowna's husband
Is doom'd to shed his blood?
And couldst thou Ivan, could thy artless nature,
E'en tho' I strictly charg'd thee, from Naritzin
Conceal the truth? Galvez!

GALVEZ *enters.*

Most welcome Galvez.

Where is thy lord?

Galv. But now we crossed the drawbridge—
I saw him slowly passing towards the castle.

Pet. How! underneath this roof, and still
avoid me!

Say, was all peace and quiet on his round?
No sight; no sound unwonted?

Galv. All methought
Seemed tranquil—but— [*a footstep is heard.*

Pet. I hear his footsteps—hence—

[*Exit GALVEZ.*

How solemn his approach.

[*NARITZIN enters, lays down his sword and cloak.*

Narit. Thou here! oh Heaven!

Pet. Late is the hour of thy return, and bleak
The gales of night sweep round the battlements
That crest the fort. You are o'ertir'd I fear;
The chill breeze and the night storms ceaseless fury
Have sorely harass'd me.

Narit. I reck'd them not;
'Tis not the outward storm—'tis here—'tis here!

Pet. Come to thy rest.

Narit. Thou too—at this late hour.

Why art thou absent from thy peaceful chamber?
I did not look to find thee waking, love,
Or I had quicklier urged my homeward step—
I pray thee to thy chamber.

Pet. But thou seem'st
By misery oppress—I dread to ask thee:
Yet, I beseech you—in thy nightly round—

Nar. Wherefore this silence?—

Pet. Say, was all secure?

Narit. All seemed secure.

Pet. Seem'd! (*aside*) I dread Mirovitz!
Saw you, or heard you ought unwonted? Speak!

Narit. Nought that concerns thy care.

Pet. But was there ought?

Narit. As I drew near the fort that guards the
prisoners,

Methought I heard the whisper of a voice
In utterance like Rimuni's: but in vain
I search'd each spot, 'twas idle fancy, and——

Pet. Is there yet more?

Narit. When last I went my round,
A centinel who answered to my challenge,
With whisper'd words, and looks of no light
meaning,

Pray'd me to wait him here.

Pet. (*to herself*) That centinel
And utterance like Rimuni's! Heaven forefend!
Yet (*to him*) for it closely presses on my soul,
Tell me, Naritzin, when your search explor'd
The prisoners dungeons, did you look on Ivan?
Fain would I know after this day of trouble,
If calm his sleep.

Narit. I left his cell unsearch'd:
I could not interrupt poor Ivan's slumber.
The innocent may sleep. I fear'd to wake him.

Pet. You have not seen him then?

Narit. Not now.

Pet. (*with unguarded transport*) Thank heaven!
Then Ivan knows it not.

Narit. Not know it—what?

What words have 'scap'd thy lips? unfold their
meaning.

Pet. How, said I ought? oh, heed it not! the tongue

At times will murmur words devoid of sense.

Narit. (*aside*) 'Tis as I fear'd—nay, be at peace, Petrowna,

Vex not thy soul with fruitless woe. Enough
The troubles of this day of bitterness.

Yet—but it little recks: 'tis a light question,
One scarce of moment, when you saw the Em-
press

Pet. Waste not a thought on her; recall her not.

Narit. I pray you mark my words, Petrowna,
say——

Give me I pray strict answer, did the Em-
press——

Pet. (*confused*) The Empress!

Narit. Why thus troubled? did her speech
Disclose——

Pet. Oh, peace! spare, spare me, yet awhile,
My spirit is within me bow'd and broken.
My husband!—we will talk of this hereafter.
Oh! let us taste the blessings of repose,
And to kind angels reconcile our thoughts,
Ere deeper woe o'erpower us; do not linger:
Sleep will not on my eyelids shed its balm
While thou art absent. [*Exit Petrowna.*

Narit. Never on my lid
Shall slumber shed the blessing of repose.
'Tis as I fear'd: the Empress has betray'd
The fatal secret. Underneath the veil

Of tempting words, e'en in Petrowna's smile
I noted the sharp pang that rack'd her soul.
I am her bane and horror: thro' the day,
Her eye will wither mine with frozen look,
And in her dreams her night-shriek will denounce
Vengeance on Ivan's murderer—I am doom'd
With this infernal gift (*the dagger*) to pierce his
heart.

So guilt engenders guilt, till, ripe for vengeance,
On the offender's brow eternal justice
Heaps dreadful retribution.

PETROWNA *enters*.

Pet. How! Naritzin—
Why thus delay? has ought occur'd? Oh say:
You seem disturb'd—

Nar. I pray thee to thy chamber—
Fear nothing—be at peace—I pray depart—
I must not be gain-sai'd—

[*Leads her out, and returns.*]

GALVEZ *enters hastily*.

Galv. My Lord, a soldier
Seeks instant entrance. [Galvez goes.]

Nar. Hither quickly lead him—
My soul misgives me.

[Galvez enters with Ortosk.]
Wherefore here—be brief—

Why, at this hour, here seek me?

Ort. Speed—I pray:

Haste to the prisoners cells. My lord, delay not.
I will on our way relate the dark design
That aims at Ivan's freedom.

Narit. Righteous Heaven!

Now, ere this blade drops blood, in mercy strike
me!—

My sword—my cloak: take thou thy weapons,
Galvez.

Petrowna! 'tis for thee my bosom bleeds:

Oh be deep slumber on her. Speed we forth

To Ivan's cell. [*Exeunt.*]

Pet. (*within*) Why! why this long delay?

(*enters*) It tortures me.—My Lord Naritzin gone?

Without one brief farewell! Who guards the por-
tal? [*soldier enters.*]

Where is thy lord?

Sol. But now he past the gate.

Pet. Alone?

Sol. No: Galvez with him—swift they sped:

With him a soldier of the guard, no doubt

Fraught with important mission.

Pet. Merciful Heaven!

Hast thou deceived me, Mirovitz? my friend!

In thy good guard I trust—speed quickly on—

On to the eastern ramparts. Aid me Heaven.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

The outside of IVAN'S Cell.

NARITZIN, GALVEZ, and ORTOSK enter.

Narit. Soldier! on yon commanding bastion
take

Thy stand: that eminence o'erlooks the fortress.
Note carefully if aught unwonted strike

Thy wary eye: and give me timely warning.

[stations him on the outside of the scene.

I charge you, on your life, keep strictest watch.

Galvez, there take thy stand; and, at my sum-
mons,

Speed quickly hither. *(by himself)*. Not a sound,
no motion—

Oh! that the roar of winds, the crash of thun-
der

Peal'd through these noiseless vaults, so might
they silence

These audible throbs, this tempest in my heart!

There—Ivan—there—thou slumberest in yon
dungeon. *[approaches the cell.*

Now when I visited the prisoners' cells,

Each, one by one, though there my main charge
lay,

I could not break upon thy hour of rest.

Thrice I drew near the cell, with full intent

To warn thee of my vow: my heart recoil'd;

Yet all must be reveal'd, or worse ensues.

[he listens at the door of the Cell.

Soft! 'tis his hour of slumber—why that sound?

What do I hear! his deep groan strikes my
ear:

And now a quick and agitated step

Rings on the echoing flints—belov'd Petrowna!

All hope of bliss with thee is fled for ever;

Ivan must know his doom—Ivan!

Ivan. (in the cell.) Who summons?

'Tis not the time.

Narit. (unlocks the cell.) Ivan!

Ivan. Who loudly summons?

Thy name? thy purpose?

Narit. You behold Naritzin.

Why did you ask, who summons? what thy
meaning?

Look on me steadily, thou art not wont

To turn thine eye from mine.

Ivan. Naritzin here?

Not banish'd—this thy coming, so unlook'd for!

Narit. I understand thee not—but, 'tis no
time

For idle words; and my full heart is fraught

Beyond its bearing—I have kindly used you.

Harsh deed, or bitter word, beneath my rule,

Has never reach'd thee—and I come, commission'd

To soothe thy woe, and free thee from vile chains.

Let me unclasp these fetters. *(Unclasps them.)*

Ivan. Oh, my arm!

Art thou unchain'd? might I but front the murderer

Who plung'd me here?—Naritzin, these free limbs
So long have borne the burden of those chains,
They seem, methinks, now rest of half their substance.

And owe I this to thee?

Narit. I must disclose it,
While yet my voice has power—Ivan, 'tis sworn,
The solemn vow is ratified in Heaven.
No—to a fiend my plighted soul is bound,
To fix this murderous dagger in thy heart.
Yet, had I not so sworn, Rimuni's hand,
Ere now, had stabb'd thee.

Ivan. Let Rimuni stab me—
I would not that my blood should stain thy hand,
And lay Heaven's curse upon thee.

Narit. Now by that wish—Oh, by thy firm assurance
Of heaven, and bliss hereafter, I conjure thee,
Thus, on my knee—

Ivan. Rise! rise!

Narit. First grant my prayer.
In pity to thyself—to me in mercy,
If thou wilt spare my soul the sin of blood,
Swear, that henceforth, tho' fraud or violence
Should ope thy prison cell, thou wilt reject
The gift of offer'd freedom.

Ivan. No, I dare not.

Narit. Yet hear me, Ivan—swear thou wilt reject it;

And, day by day, thou, at Naritzin's side,
Shalt of the freshness of the free winds drink,
And on thy cheek of youth the blood shall leap
To wanton in the sunbeam—thou shalt thrill
At voice of human kindness; and gay sounds,
The lute and song, shall chase thy day-light down,
And gladness greet thy revels.

Ivan. No, I dare not.

But yesterday my oath had answer'd thee,
And sanctify'd thy offer—never, now—
'Twas but this morn I heard th' exulting call
Of high rais'd hope, of freedom, vengeance, em-
pire.

I am not master of my mind—my soul
Has been disturb'd, and my proud spirit soar'd
On the high wing of infinite desires,
That burn for their accomplishment—no—never
Shall Ivan be what once he was, content
To lurk with vipers in th' empoison'd cell,
And coil'd in frozen apathy, there perish,
Crush'd like a noisome reptile from creation,
Beneath the foot that spurns it.

Narit. (to himself, in utmost agony) Must I slay
him?

Ivan. What—bribe me to submission with gay
pleasures,

The lute, and song, and feast? Unchain the lion,
Whom time and famine, and sore blows, have
taught

To crouch beneath man's foot in seeming tameness,
Then bid him lick the hand that beckons him
Back to the den—so henceforth look on Ivan.

Narit. 'Tis sworn, this dagger slays thee.

Ivan. Away—who made thee arbiter of empires?

Bade thee upraise a slave to sovereignty,
And wrest his father's sceptre from a monarch,
Whose arm has strength to wield it, and whose
heart,

Taught by self-woe, and sense of human frailty,
Would temper it with mercy.—Who am I?

Thy sov'reign—Thou! such as thy sires of old:

Thy breath, thy being, hangs upon my word—

No more with woe's weak plaint I sue for pity:

The mandate of my sovereign will obey;

Abjure thy impious vow, unbar the cell,

And, calling on the King of kings, replace

On my anointed brow the diadem:

Then shall my pardon, cancelling thy crime,

Draw down Heaven's mercy on thee.

(Footsteps heard.)

Narit. What that sound?

Ivan. I heard none.

Nar. *(half distracted with horror)* Ha! away!
—no earthly power

Shall force him hence—have I not sworn his
death?

Hear, fiend of hell!

Ivan. Thick gathering drops of sweat

Fall from his face. *(Tower clock strikes one.)*

That was th' appointed hour!

The tower strikes one! *(GALVEZ rushes in.)*

Gal. As towards the east I gaz'd,
I saw a beacon on the topmost tower

Distinctly wave ; then suddenly it vanished,
And all was dark.

Nar. Speed, speed ! resume thy station ;
Observe again what passes.

*As GALVEZ goes out, a violent knocking is
heard at the outside of the cell.*

Ivan. Who thus knocks ?

Pet. (without) It is Petrowna : haste—unclose
the cell.

Ivan ! unclose the cell.

Ivan. (to Narit.) Conceal that dagger.
My death-groan must not wound Petrowna's ear.

Pet. (without) Oh ! do not murder him ! un-
close the cell.

They come—on every side swift gleaming lights
Flash to and fro.

*Ivan. (opens the cell ; he and PETROWNA em-
brace)* Petrowna !

Pet. Horror ! horror !

Naritzin ! Ivan ! whither shall I turn ?

I know thy horrid vow : the dæmon told it.

Come to me, Ivan ! *(GALVEZ rushes in.)*

Gal. Treason ! I beheld
The beacon torch thrice wave.

(ORTOSK rushes in.)

Con. Come forth : arm'd men,
Rush tow'rd the prisoner's cell.

Narit. Ring out th' alarum ;
Summon the guard. Petrowna ! to thy chamber.
Horror and death surround the cell—away !

Ivan. If Ivan e'er was dear to thee, depart !

Pet. I stir not hence ; they have deceiv'd me,
Ivan !

I did not counsel this. Thou shalt not slay him !
My breast his shield.

(Alarum rings. The tumult of the Conspirators is heard.)

Miro. (without) Force down the iron draw-
bridge ;

Break down the bars.

Rim. (without) Rescue to Ivan !

Conspirators. (without) Rescue !

Narit. Not if this sword has power. Galvez !
come forth. *(They rush out.)*

Ivan. (to PETROWNA) Not thine the plot. Oh !
loose me—I will aid him.

Pet. Stay ! Ivan, stay ! Their numbers will
o'erpower them ;

They close them in on every side. Help, Heav'n !

Ivan. Unclasp thy hold : this arm shall guard
Naritzin.

(As IVAN is rushing forth, RIMUNI, and several of the Conspirators enter with flaming torches and waving swords.)

Rim. Be all the past forgotten. *(Kneels.)* Em-
peror, hail !

Rimuni's hand shall crown thee.

Ivan. Thou ! thou crown me !

(Snatches a sword from one of the Conspirators.)

Thy sword. Thou crown me!—first the fiend of
darkness

Shall cleave the womb of earth, and round this
brow

Rivet his burning diadem.—Die, monster!

*(They fight. RIMUNI wounds IVAN, who
sinks, struggling, on one knee.)*

Rim. Not by thy nerveless arm! *(To the soldier.*

Pet. He bleeds—brave men!

Defend him—guard your sovereign!

[As they advance IVAN starts up.

Ivan. Back, back, slaves.

Yet, yet this arm has strength to sweep from earth
This dæmon: aid, kind Heaven, this righteous
blow,

Then to thy rest receive me.

(They fight—IVAN kills him.

Rim. Mercy! mercy!

*[Rimuni dies; during this time the tumult is
heard without, and now FEODOR and MI-
ROVITZ, and the remaining Conspirators,
rush in, driving back NARITZIN, GAL-
VEZ, and Soldiers.*

Miro. Ivan, come forth! 'tis Mirovitz who calls
thee!

To freedom—vengeance—empire!

Narit. *(snatching the sword from IVAN, stands
over him with the dagger, in act to strike IVAN)*
Never! never!

Thou must not live—back, traitors, or this dagger
Now strikes him dead.

Pet. *(seizing his arm)* Oh, do not shed his
blood;

First pierce Petrowna's breast.

Ivan. (to NARITZIN) Naritzin, stay,
Stay thy rash hand, not on thy soul that curse.

Miro. (to FEODOR) Wrest, wrest the dagger
from him—(to *Conspirators*) Rescue Ivan :
Think of your oaths.

Cons. Rescue to Ivan.

Narit. Never,
While I have being.

(FEODOR *wrests the dagger from NARITZIN*,
MIROVITZ *rushes forward to slay him.*)

Miro. Die then.

(PETROWNA *seizes the arm of MIROVITZ*.

Pet. Ivan—Ivan—

I sooth'd thy sufferings : shield Petrowna's hus-
band,

Or bury in this breast that murderous blade !

Ivan. I will defend him—yea, and free his soul
From that fell dæmon's yoke.

Pet. Ivan.

Ivan. Hush ! hush !

Oh ! be at peace !—another word unman's me—

The wretched Ivan can no more sustain

The anguish of thy soul—

(*Snatches the dagger from MIROVITZ, and
stabs himself.*)

Thus, thus, I end it—

And in thy arms, Petrowna, die in peace. (*Dies.*)

THE END.

ON THE PERFORMANCE OF

MISS O'NEIL,

At the Birmingham Theatre, October, 1816.

WHO can, like NEIL, so pow'rfully diffuse
Th' entrancing charms of the dramatic muse?
Who can, like her, so feelingly pourtray
The human passions, in correct array;
And give to each, in the minutest part,
The nat'ral trait that tremulates the heart;
While Sensibility's sweet touch refin'd,
With pow'rful magic seizes on the mind?
Matchless she stands; and Envy shrinks away,
Struck dumb with wonder, from the face of day;
And ev'ry tongue and ev'ry hand conveys
The echoing sounds of universal praise.

Thus may applause long wait on her career,
And ease and affluence her moments cheer;
Long may she live to grace (devoid of strife)
The walks of social and of public life;
And immortality embalm her name
On the high summit of dramatic fame.

On Miss O'Neil's want of Generosity.

With all O'NEIL's surprising art and skill,
Her wond'rous pow'rs, and energy at will,
What pity 'tis---benevolence of spirit
Should form no part of her amazing merit!
When such abundance fell unto her lot,
Why was the Gen'ral Hospital forgot?
Greedy she seems for soft bank paper's touch,
And thinks the public cannot give too much.
Whatever sum unto her share may fall,
Her Av'rice wants it, and she'll *nail* it all.

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